CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

CCD/285
14 April 1970
ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

HUNGARY, MONGOLIA AND POLAND

Working paper submitted by the delegations of the Hungarian People's Republic, the Mongolian People's Republic and the Polish People's Republic in connexion with the draft Convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and on the destruction of such weapons

I

A new article is to be included in the text of the Convention reading:

"1. Each State Party to this Convention which finds that actions of any other State Party constitute a breach of the obligations assumed under articles I and II of the Convention, may lodge a complaint with the Security Council of the United Nations. Such a complaint should include all possible evidence confirming its validity as well as a request for its consideration by the Security Council. The Security Council shall inform the States Parties to this Convention of the result of the investigation.

2. Each State Party to this Convention undertakes to cooperate in carrying out any investigations which the Security Council may undertake on the basis of the complaint received by the Council."

II

Draft Security Council Resolution

"The Security Council,

Highly appreciating the desire of a large number of States to subscribe to the Convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and on the destruction of such weapons,

Bearing in mind that under article ... of the Convention the States Parties shall have the right to lodge complaints with the Security Council together with a request for their consideration by the Council,

Recognizing the need for appropriate measures with a view to ensuring the observance of the obligations contained in the Convention,

GE.70-7118
70-09782

Taking into consideration the desire of the States Parties to cooperate with the Security Council with a view to ensuring the strict observance of the obligations contained in the Convention,

I. Declares its readiness:

- to give urgent consideration to any complaints lodged under article ... of the Convention,
- to take all necessary measures for the investigation of a complaint,
- to inform the States Parties to the Convention of the result of the investigation;

2. Calls upon all States Parties to the Convention to cooperate with a view to implementing the provisions of this Convention."

CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

CCD/285/Corr.1
15 April 1970
ENGLISH ONLY

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Corrigendum

The last word of operative paragraph 2 of the draft Security Council resolution in part II of the working paper should read "resolution" instead of "convention".

GE.70-7195
70-09620

CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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Origin 1: ENGLISH

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Working Paper on Toxins

1. The United States has renounced the production, stockpiling and use of toxins, and has confined its military programme on toxins to research and development for defensive purposes only. Thus, the United States policy on toxins is identical to its policy on biological programmes.

2. Toxins are poisonous substances produced by biological organisms, including microbes, animals, and plants. Examples of microbial toxins are botulinum toxin, staphylococcus enterotoxin, diphtheria toxin, and tetanus toxin. Toxins produced by animals include puffer fish poison, snake and bee venom, and shellfish poison. Plant toxins include ricin, produced by the caster oil plant, cicutoxin produced by the poison hemlock, and abrin, produced by the Indian licorice seed plant. Laboratory experimentation has shown that, in general, these naturally occurring poisons are far more toxic than the known nerve agents.

3. Two bacterial toxins, botulinum toxin and staphylococcal enterotoxin, have long been discussed as potential agents of warfare. The botulinum toxin is one of the most poisonous substances known to science, and has been estimated to be up to 10,000 times as poisonous as nerve agents. For comparison purposes, if 15 tons of nerve agent would cause 50 per cent deaths over an area of up to 60 square kilometers, then about one and one-half kilograms of botulinum toxin would theoretically produce the same effect. Or, 15 tons of botulinum toxin could theoretically cause 50 per cent deaths in an unprotected population in an area up to 600,000 square kilometers. Effectiveness would of course depend upon dissemination technology, and actual coverage could vary significantly. Consequently, because of their inherently different characteristics (for example, toxicity), toxins and nerve agents have different possible military roles.

4. Where the target population is without protection, toxins could be delivered in a given area with relatively limited logistical effort. Even when masked, the target population would not be certain of protection against toxins because their extremely low dose rate would make masks with minor leaks ineffective, although effective masks would provide substantial protection.

GE.70-7647
70-09617

5. In contrast to the biological organisms from which they are produced, toxins are not living organisms and are not capable of reproducing themselves. For this reason, the disease or poisoning caused by toxins is not transmissible from man to man. Thus, toxins cannot cause infectious disease, epidemics, or long-term sources of illness. Consequently toxins could create mass casualties among an adversary's population without risk of spreading to infect the nation initiating use of toxins. The characteristic symptoms of many bacterial diseases are caused by the toxins produced within the human body by living bacteria. Examples of diseases that can be produced by toxins are botulism, tetanus, diphtheria and staphylococcal food poisoning.

6. In common with biological agents, toxins generally have delayed poisonous effects. Their delayed action varies with the particular toxin. Because of their high potency, the effective dosage in man is extremely small if he is neither masked nor immunized. Toxins, if used as weapons, could be dispersed in aerosol form at considerable distances from the target and could cover a very large area, resembling the large areas that could be covered by biological agents. Casualties would therefore result after the target population had been subjected to extremely small quantities of the toxin.

7. With regard to the effects of toxins, botulinum toxin produces botulism, an acute and highly fatal disease. There are at present six types of this toxin of which four are known to be toxic for man. The disease, botulism, is characterized by the combination of extreme weakness, vomiting, thirst, fever, dizziness, blurred vision, dilated pupils, facial paralysis and weakness of respiratory muscles. Death is attributable to paralysis, respiratory failure, and associated cardiac arrest. These symptoms do not appear for 12 to 72 hours.

8. All persons are susceptible to the disease, which occurs naturally throughout the world. While almost completely effective immunization is possible, such measures would be effective only if administered well before any exposure. The mortality rate for naturally occurring botulism in the United States is approximately 65 percent. If effectively weaponized and delivered in a highly purified state, botulinum toxin could have a mortality rate approaching 100 percent. The toxin could be delivered either as an aerosol or through contamination of water supplies.

9. Staphylococcal enterotoxin is a stable protein which produces an acute incapacitation known as staphylococcal food poisoning. It is characterized by severe nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, and prostration. Its effects generally last for 24 hours.

10. A plant toxin thought to have potential military utility is ricin, which is extracted from the caster bean. The lethal dose of ricin in man is not know, but it is estimated from animal studies to be about 80 millionths of a gram for the average man. Ricin causes death by paralysis.

11. The production of bacterial toxins in any significant quantity would require facilities similar to those needed for the production of biological agents. Though toxins of the type useful for military purposes could conceivably be produced by chemical synthesis in the future, the end products would be the same in the effects of their use and those effects would be indistinguishable from toxins produced by bacteriological or other biological processes.